



2020-2021 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
Preparedness, Response and Reopening Plan

Last updated: 4/16/2021



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The Learning Center for the Deaf

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Preparedness, Response & Reopening Plan

***Intended audience of this document:** TLC Community members including: all employees, students, families, clients, patients, local educational agencies, stakeholders and community partners. This plan is also to be shared with the licensing and contracting state agencies including the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as the City of Framingham's Department of Public Health (DPH).*

The lettered headings (A-I) are labeled to correspond with the DESE Template for reopening plan submission.

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document has been created following guidelines developed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Framingham Board of Health (BOH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools (MAAPS) and Cushman and Wakefield (C&W). **TLC will follow all governmental guidelines.**

This return to work and school action plan details how we plan to reopen and mitigate risk to all employees and students to every extent possible. The plan outlines the steps TLC is taking to address COVID-19 and highlights the responsibilities of all staff.

While we will implement various protocols to ensure safety, it is up to each TLC employee and family to follow the personal responsibility guidance as advised by the [CDC](#).

The Learning Center for the Deaf is a nationally-recognized leader in educational, therapeutic, and community services for deaf and hard of hearing children and adults. Over the past 50 years, TLC has seen tremendous growth – from a small school in a rented room to a robust, diverse multi-service agency with 17 buildings on a 14-acre campus and two additional locations, one in Framingham and the other in Springfield.

Today, TLC is the largest provider of services to deaf and hard of hearing children in New England, and a nationally-recognized employer of choice for ASL-fluent and deaf and hard of hearing professionals. Marie Philip School (MPS) is a Pre-K – 12+ day school with a residential/boarding option, enrolls over 200 deaf and hard of hearing students in a language-rich bilingual-bicultural environment on campus. Walden School (WS) is a nationally-recognized residential, clinical and educational program for deaf youth 7-22 years old. Students are challenged by severe social and emotional difficulties and have significant treatment needs. The Learning Center for the Deaf is a Chapter 766 publicly-funded private school. All students are deaf or hard of hearing and all students are on Individualized Education Plans.

At TLC we are aware that the best learning environment for the majority of students is on-campus, in-person learning with peers. Walden School has remained open for residential students. We are committed to a full reopening with a return to campus for all **as soon as it is safe to do so**. Given the unique nature of welcoming students back on campus, special attention will be given to the planning to reopen the Marie Philip School and to reopen school for the Walden School commuting students. Planning for the school programs will be in conjunction with the Education Reopening Committee, the Principals of both MPS and WS, and the Director of Health Services. Developing a plan for students' return requires additional care and consideration given that



some students are not able to fully participate in remote learning because of their unique needs. The Director of Health Services is in contact with TLC's Consulting Pediatrician, Dr. Linda Cozzens. Advisories from DESE, EEC and MAAPS are of the utmost importance as we prepare to reopen school.

The Educational team is complying with DESE's recommendation of preparing a reopening plan that addresses three possible learning models for this fall: in-person learning with new safety requirements, a hybrid of in-person and remote learning, and the continuation of fully remote learning (to ensure continuity of learning throughout the school year, even if circumstances change).

We plan to start the 2020-2021 school year this fall with Remote Learning, move to the Hybrid Model, and then Fully In-Person Learning, in a Four Phase Approach to opening, described later in this document.

1. Remote Learning: All Marie Philip School (MPS) and commuting Walden School (WS) students will begin remotely. This option will [continue to be available](#) to any MPS/WS student in grades PreK-12+ throughout the academic year, should parents prefer not to send their child to in person learning. Students who participate through this model will engage in a full school day of remote (synchronous and asynchronous) teaching and learning experiences.
2. Hybrid Learning Model: This option provides PreK-12+ students with a combination of in-person and remote learning experiences when we begin phasing students back mid-fall. All PreK-12+ students will be remote on Wednesdays.
3. Fully In-Person Learning: When it is safe to do so, when required social distancing requirements have been relaxed, students will attend their regular academic subject areas and specialist subjects on campus. Residential students at Walden School have been involved with in-person instruction since the campus closed mid-March. Sixteen students have received in person instruction each school day. These students will continue to receive in-person instruction.

Once the Hybrid Learning Model begins, everyone should be fully prepared for a return to remote learning if necessary, and understand that it could be a decision that must be made at a moment's notice, based on health and safety. Some epidemiological studies suggest we could experience a "second wave" or a resurgence of the pandemic, which other states and countries have experienced. Once the hybrid phase is initiated, we must be ready for the possibility that all of our classes may return to fully remote instruction.

When the Hybrid Learning Model begins, students will return using a staggered approach, and parents/guardians will be informed when their child can return to school. We recognize that for some families their child/student may continue to participate in remote learning. Doctors notes are **not** required, and families will not be locked into one particular learning model for the entire school year. If a family has a change of circumstance, wants to make a different decision, or has yet to submit a preference, the parent/guardian may contact their child's principal for a Student Learning Change Request Form.

Public schools in the Commonwealth were granted by DESE ten additional professional development days and a reduction in required instructional hours for students for the 2020-2021 year. It is important to acknowledge here that this additional time was not granted for Chapter 766 schools. Absent the delayed start option, a phased opening will allow TLC to ensure that we are opening schools and programs in the safest manner available to us. The diversity of programs and services provided by TLC both on campus and in the community necessitates this document as serving as general reopening guidelines, and applies to all TLC programs, in a phased-opening approach. We reserve the right to make changes to any and all aspects of this TLC Reopening Plans, as we consider community feedback, additional guidance from the State, and continue to monitor COVID-19 trends.



THANK YOU

There is only one way to tackle the kinds of complex challenges that we have faced during the pandemic, and that is together. We are grateful for the tireless work of so many during the past few months. The planning process surfaced many challenges associated with our safe return to school. Thank you to all those who helped us respond to community questions and problem-solve the issues, including our dedicated Focus Area Planning members and hard-working administrators, principals, and educational leaders.

Last but not least, a big thank you to the many students, staff, parents, and caregivers for your partnership and support these past several months—We know it hasn't been easy. Thank you for your patience, for responding to our surveys, for your emails and communications, and for participating in our Town Hall Conversations. We learned from your experiences during the emergency school closure, and your input has helped to inform this plan. We have accomplished a lot in a short period, and we have you—our incredible community—to thank for it!

B. LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

As The Learning Center for the Deaf prepares to reopen amid the COVID-19 pandemic, we are committed to prioritizing the health and safety of the entire TLC Community. Keeping TLC and the larger community we serve safe is at the forefront of all decision-making. Given the continuously changing information, this document has been developed based on the information that was available from State agencies as of August 14, 2020 for an August 2020 reoccupation plan. As information is modified and becomes available, this document will be revised.

First and foremost, our actions are guided by our mission: *The mission of The Learning Center for the Deaf is to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing children and adults thrive by having the knowledge, opportunity and power to design the future of their choice.* The TLC Pandemic Reopening Plan is founded upon consideration of these five interlocking components of reopening: 1) risks to public & organization constituents' health, 2) schools'/programs importance to family support and communication access, 3) impacts on students' & families' learning and thriving, 4) safeguarding readiness, and 5) individual responsibility. In the words of Governor Baker, "This effort will hinge, fundamentally, on personal responsibility. As everyone knows, we're not helpless in this fight. We all have roles to play. And you have proven time and time again that you can play them."

While the State's guidance seems straightforward, the complexities of schools are endless. Thankfully, we began the return-to-school planning process in April 2020. The State's new guidance, based mainly on studies from outside of the United States, relaxes safety protocols for schools, which is concerning for many in our community. We have all done our part these past few months to reduce the spread of the virus. We followed stay-at-home orders, wore face-masks in public, and honored the social distancing guidelines of six feet. These safety measures appear to make a difference, and it would be unfortunate to forego the sacrifices already made by implementing less restrictive safety measures now. In consultation with public health experts, taking into consideration the vulnerability of many in our population, TLC will impose stricter social distancing guidelines in classrooms than those required by DESE.

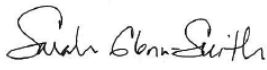
Unlike a public school, MPS is a specialized publicly-funded private special education school that cannot fill teacher vacancies with another union member teacher from a vast pool of educators. Nationwide, there is a shortage of teachers specialized in Deaf Education. We have a finite number of teachers and education staff, all of whom are specialized in using ASL as the primary language of instruction. Our educators live in multiple districts across the Commonwealth as well as additional states, and many of them are parents themselves and/or have indicated vulnerable health needs. We have a finite number of teachers and education staff, all of whom are specialized in using ASL as the primary language of instruction. Our educators live in multiple districts across the Commonwealth, and many of them are parents themselves or have indicated health needs that would



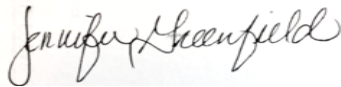
make them more susceptible to COVID-19 complications. With other districts' plans not being finalized until mid-August, many of our educators will need flexibility, depending on what their home district decides for their own school-aged children. Some members of our school community—students, staff, and parents—continue to express their strong desire to return to school in-person and fully in-person immediately this fall. At the same time, we recognize that we may experience a resurgence of the virus, and we must prepare for the possibility that learning will be entirely remote should this occur. We believe a phased-in approach best positions the TLC Community, students and educators to construct the safest school environment. This plan will detail the phased opening approach as well as the rationale behind the proposed structure.

It will not be easy, and it will be different, but we are confident that TLC will continue to thrive and be stronger than ever.

Sincerely,



Dr. Sarah Glenn-Smith
Chief Executive Officer
The Learning Center for the Deaf



Jennifer Greenfield
Superintendent
Marie Philip School



Michelle Cline
Executive Director
Walden School

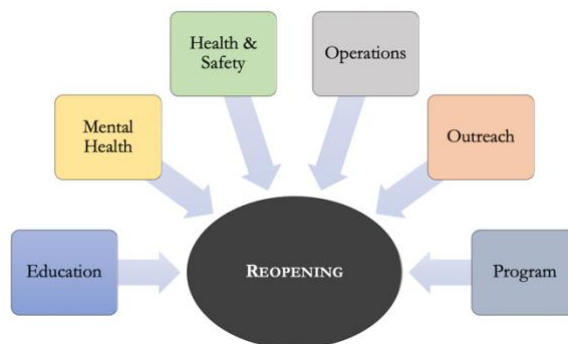


BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a novel coronavirus that has not been previously identified. COVID-19 is a highly contagious illness that is caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. Symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness. For more information please see the [CDC](#) main website and this fact CDC [fact sheet](#).

PLAN APPROACH:

The Plan was developed by the TLC REOPENING RESPONSE TEAM, comprised of Team Captains, Co-Captain(s) and a minimum of 5 Contributing Members, assigned to each Focus Area. Adhering to best practice safety guidelines available at the time, we will continue to vigilantly focus on what we can control, trust in the advice of experts, partner with all local, state and national partners and governing bodies, and continue to adapt our plan as guidance and available data evolves.



INTRODUCTION

This document has been created following guidelines developed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Framingham Board of Health (BOH), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the Massachusetts Association of Approved Private Schools (MAAPS) and Cushman and Wakefield (C&W). **The lettered headings (A-I) are labeled to correspond with the DESE Template for reopening plan submission.** TLC will follow all governmental guidelines.

This return to work and school action plan details how we plan to reopen and mitigate risk to all employees and students to every extent possible. The plan outlines the steps TLC is taking to address COVID-19 and highlights the responsibilities of all staff.

While we will implement various protocols to ensure safety, it is up to each TLC employee and family to follow the personal responsibility advised by the [CDC](#). By releasing this return to work and school action plan, TLC is communicating our plans moving forward, highlighting workplace and school protocols in place to protect safety and establish a level of comfort for all of our employees, students, families and clients as we return to in person/on campus and community work.

The diversity of programs and services provided by TLC both on campus and in the community necessitates this document is serving as general reopening guidelines, and applies to all TLC programs.

START OF SCHOOL

Walden School students start on August 28, 2020. Marie Philip students start on August 31, 2020. Please see links [here](#) for Marie Philip School and Walden School Calendars.

FOUR PHASED OPENING APPROACH (H. "OTHER")

After extensive planning of the various models, reviewing current data, public health practices, and best practices, and incorporating feedback from families and staff, TLC is recommending a phased-opening approach. The phased opening will begin with remote instruction, move to hybrid instruction, then move to fully in-person. The rationale follows.



Phased Opening Rationale:

1. Allows necessary preparation time for teachers. Public schools across the Commonwealth have been afforded 10 additional days for preparation. This has not been similarly afforded to publicly-funded private special education schools, yet is equally needed. A remote start provides educators time to first learn behavior management strategies to support healthy hygienic practice in the school setting, especially for our youngest and highest-need learners. It removes the immediate challenge of both monitoring students' behaviors and hygiene in a live setting and teaching in the new learning environment; and allows time for teachers to adapt to new requirements prior to student reentry, enhancing the success of a hybrid model.
2. Considers the guidance by the Governor for reopening that affords equity to students in participation; TLC is located in Framingham, currently identified as moderate risk (**Community [COVID Color Maps](#) are updated weekly; as of the initial report, Framingham was designated moderate; however, TLC continues to be vigilant in monitoring these reports as Framingham's designation has fluctuated through the pandemic*). We also enroll students from towns including designated high-risk areas. It is not right to exclude students from some high-risk towns while including others from lower-risk areas.
3. Allows us to use the maximum amount of time remaining to focus on execution of an efficient, and singularly focused plan, rather than dividing energies between multiple contingencies, as well as time needed to translate needed training materials into ASL.
4. Allows us to ensure the adults are comfortable with all safety routines and policies prior to introducing students.
5. A remote start is sensitive to the broad, systemic health and safety concerns and emerging research of how the virus is spread and who is at-risk.
6. Due to space constraints required for the safety provided by mandatory social distancing, a hybrid model will be maintained until social distancing is no longer required to maintain safety.
7. Allows educators to identify equity gaps early in the year and develop systems to respond to the safety and technology needs of parents and students.
8. Creates space and time for in-depth training of all staff on COVID-19 policies and safety procedures.
9. Fully allows educators to personalize online learning needs, working with students and families by responding to the needs of diverse learners. As we identify learners and practices best served by in-person school supports, educators can work with their colleagues to implement necessary interventions for students who need it most, and at regular intervals.
10. Provides parents the most amount of time available to us to plan for childcare and in-home support of remote learning.
11. Allows our most vulnerable students with the highest needs, as well as our youngest students transition back to routines without the stimulation of a full campus.
12. Allows for more time and opportunity for frequent cleaning.

We do not take these decisions lightly, there are ongoing health and safety concerns to consider before we are ready for a full return to school. While no one is risk-free, we have a duty to keep all members of our school community as safe as possible.



FOUR PHASE OPENING SCHEDULE:

**DATE(S)	DESCRIPTION			*FORMAT
	Remote	Hybrid	In-person	
<p><i>* assume all "in-person" formats are socially distanced to the highest degree possible</i></p>				
<p><i>**Dates are presented for planning purposes. Transition from one Phase to the next is dependent on the ability to safely do so based on the then-current safety data available. Phases will be lengthened if it is determined that we cannot safely progress. Final decisions on phase progression will be decided by the "announcement date" indicated in each phase.</i></p>				
<p>Note:</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Effective 2021: Students are permitted to eat in the cafeteria while maintaining six-foot social distancing and following outlined protocols</i> ▪ <i>No fieldtrips, sports or work-related staff travel likely until Phase 4 – April, 2021 (see page 17)</i> ▪ <i>Whenever possible, staff meetings should accommodate no less than 3 feet social distance between people and 6 feet whenever possible.</i> ▪ <i>Weather-permitting, all gym classes, mask breaks and recess periods will be held outside.</i> ▪ <i>Weather-permitting, several classes will be held outside.</i> ▪ <i>Until full in-person learning models are implemented (see page 16), Wednesdays will be fully remote or half day instruction to allow for cleaning and staff development.</i> 				
<p><i>Given that The Learning Center for the Deaf serves students and families from all over the State of Massachusetts, we are also monitoring the color-coded metric from DPH / COVID-19 Command released 8/11/2020, DESE for the data on the districts with whom we partner.</i></p>				



PHASE ONE: Training, education staff return, remote student learning

Announcement Date: 8/11/20 **REMOTE** | **HYBRID** | **IN-PERSON**

8/21	New staff orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remote
8/24-8/28- MPS 8/24-8/27- WS	All staff return to prepare for the start of classes. 1.5 hours/day will be dedicated to training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education Staff in-person
8/28- WS	First day of classes for Walden School (WS) WS has been open since March 2020, continuation of services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WS Commuter Students Remote ▪ WS Education Staff & Residential students in-person
8/31-9/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All classes 8:00AM – 12:00PM. ▪ Marie Philip School (MPS) Staff teach from campus M/T/TH/F & teach remotely on Wed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students assigned project-based/independent remote work in the afternoons. ○ Mandatory Staff training- 1PM-3:00PM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MPS, WS Commuter Students & non-education staff Remote ▪ Education Staff & WS Residential students in-person M/T/TH/F (MPS remote on Wed.)
9/8-10/13	All MPS classes remote, teachers/aides/support services work from campus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ M/T/TH/F- staff teach remotely from campus ▪ W- ½ day instruction & ½ day training ▪ W- All staff work/teach remotely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MPS, WS Commuter Students & non-education staff Remote ▪ Education Staff & WS residential in-person M/T/TH/F (MPS remote on Wed.)
9/8-10/9	WS- in person for residential & remote for commuter students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ W- ½ day instruction & ½ day training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ WS Commuter Students Remote ▪ Education Staff & WS Residential students in-person



PHASE TWO: Highest need students begin return to hybrid model		
REMOTE HYBRID IN-PERSON A HYBRID MODEL WILL BE MAINTAINED AS LONG AS SAFETY GUIDELINES REQUIRE SOCIAL DISTANCING.		
<i>Revised 10-14-2020</i> Walden School (WS) Marie Philip School (MPS)		
10/13 -10/29	WS- Hybrid model to begin for 6 commuter students, based on grade level & clinical need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in person continues for residential students ○ Hybrid model to begin for 6 commuter students based on grade level & clinical need. ○ MPS Highest needs students begin hybrid (10/29: Green Cohort) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some WS Commuter Students Remote ▪ WS Commuter students to be phased into a Hybrid schedule ▪ High-needs MPS Students to begin phased-in approach to Hybrid schedule ▪ MPS Education Staff & WS residential in-person ▪ Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training
10/13-10/29	MPS in-person hybrid begins for high-need students (ECC-Secondary students). <i>All other students remote.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education Staff in-person M/T/TH/F (MPS remote on Wed.)



10/29	MPS additional ECC students & high-needs students begin hybrid classes. <i>All remaining students remote.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High-Need/youngest MPS students Hybrid ▪ All other students Remote ▪ Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training
11/2-11/6	MPS remaining elementary and high-needs students begin hybrid classes. <i>All remaining students remote.</i>	
11/9-11/16	<p>Transition all remaining MPS students to fully hybrid model (<i>staff & students scheduled in alternating blocks in order to maintain social distancing parameters</i>).</p> <p>Afterschool care/programs in-person remains unavailable to all students at this time.</p> <p>All Wednesdays are fully remote to allow for cleaning.</p>	
12/14/20: ALL MPS HIGH NEEDS AND YOUNGEST STUDENTS WILL BE PHASED IN FOR UP TO FOUR DAYS PER WEEK WHERE PERMITTED		
12/21-12/22	MPS students will roll back to the beginning of Phase 2 and participate in fully remote learning through at least January 8, 2021 or until it is safe to return to hybrid instruction. <i>Only identified MPS highest needs students will continue with hybrid in-person learning 12/21-12/22.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPS Staff are expected to come to campus • MPS/WS will be on break 12/23/20 – 1/4/21; Instruction ends at 12 PM on 12/23
1/4/2021 – 1/8/2021	All MPS students will participate in fully remote instruction, including highest needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPS Staff will work remotely ▪ Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training



1/11/2021	<p>MPS students to return to hybrid learning in designated cohorts.</p> <p><i>**MPS to communicate required restructuring of Secondary cohorts due to high number of students remaining remote (See page 19).</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPS students, teachers and assistants will continue to teach in person with hybrid schedule • MPS Staff will teach from their classrooms • Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training
2/22/21	<p>MPS Elementary students will begin four-day in-person learning as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 22 and 23 - all students in M/Tu cohorts • February 25 and 26 - all students from Th/F cohorts plus highest needs students who attended on M/Tu • March 1 - all students who are not opting to stay remote will begin 4 days/week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training
3/17/2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Some MPS residential students return W-F pending medical clearance and additional approvals.</i> 	
3/25/21	<p>MPS Early Childhood Center students will begin four-day in-person learning as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 25 and 26 - all students from Th/F cohorts • March 29 and 30 - all students in M/Tu cohorts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesdays: ½ day instruction (remote) & ½ day staff training

PHASE THREE: Hybrid return for non-education staff

REMOTE | HYBRID | IN-PERSON



TBD	<i>If it is safe to do so:</i> Additional non-education staff return to campus (Finance, HR, Admin., etc.) <i>remote and in person schedule, department-dependent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hybrid
PHASE FOUR: Fully in-person model resumes <i>*Full in person instruction resumes when social distancing guidelines have been relaxed by DESE, as noted in their regular COVID communications Desktop memos.</i>		
REMOTE HYBRID IN-PERSON		
4/5/2021	MPS Elementary students will begin five-day instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half Day Wednesday dismissal only on April 7 and 14. • Full day Wednesday instruction returns April 28.
APRIL 19 THROUGH 23: APRIL VACATION		
4/26/21	MPS Early Childhood Center students will begin five-day instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin full day Wednesday in person instruction • ECC Wednesday schedule moves to Friday • Preschool will be half day on Fridays with continued virtual home visits • Kindergarten will be full day on Fridays
	Secondary School students return five days in person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle and High School students will return to five days in-person instruction. • <i>Families may still choose remote learning; however, if they decide to return in person they cannot opt back out to remote learning for the rest of the academic year.</i> • Beginning 4/28/21, ECC, Elementary and Secondary School students will attend full day Wednesday in-person instruction.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Wednesday ½ day instruction will end except for designated professional development days – currently assigned as: May 12, June 9 and July 14. On those dates, students will be dismissed at Noon. Dates are subject to change.</i>
<p>4/26/21 - end of school year</p>	<p>Sports, field trips and travel when social distancing requirements are relaxed or eliminated;</p> <p>After school outdoor activities will resume;</p> <p>Begin on-campus student internships through the transition program;</p> <p>Resume functional academics' IEP driven independent living skills field trips.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ After-school activities and sports <u>will resume</u> following <u>COVID protocol</u> • Begin increased flexibility mixing student cohorts and staff, while adhering to COVID safety and health protocols



RETURNING TO SCHOOL MODELS

Until such time as we are able to return safely to full-time in-person school, we are providing a slow phased opening for teaching and learning for the fall of the 2020-2021 school year: (a) Remote Learning then; (b) a Hybrid Learning Model. After weighing the pros and cons of many models of learning—including a full return to school—it was determined that this phased back-to-school option is the safest for us at this time. These services will take place remotely then either/or in-person, depending on individual circumstances.

We have collected data and feedback through surveys, committee meetings, department meetings with staff, a parent representative group, and our stakeholders and state agencies. This *informs our plans*—it does not take the place of the subjective decisions that must be made in any planning process. For something as complex as a safe return to in-person schooling, it is necessary to use a combination of our professional judgment, our knowledge of community wants and needs, and the wisdom of experts, such as our local public health officials, to assist us in making difficult decisions.

In July, 51.59% of families who responded to the TLC survey expressed a desire for a full in-person or a hybrid return to school, while 34.13% said they were unsure of sending their child to school for either in person or hybrid options. Of 126 families, 14.29% of families did say they would only consider remote learning.

Table 1. Family Learning Preferences

July 2020 Student Learning Preference (143 Responses in English, Spanish, Portuguese; including PIP families)	Send their child to school:	Keep their child at home:	Unsure (at that time):
<i>Percentage of Parents/Guardians who said they would do the following:</i>	48%	13%	32%

Staff feedback on preferences and availability also informed our model.

Table 2. Staff Work Assignment Preferences

	Full-Time Return to TLC Buildings	Hybrid Model (in-person + remote)	Remote Learning
July 2020 Staff Survey (271 Responses)	22%	35%	48%

C. IN-PERSON LEARNING MODEL

FULL IN-PERSON LEARNING-

In this model, all staff and students will return to school in person with the appropriate precautions put in place that have been outlined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We look forward to welcoming all of our students back on campus to resume school learning ‘as usual’ but we also recognize that our campus buildings, many which were former residential buildings, do not allow us to resume until further notice.

Due to space constraints, this model will only be employed when it is safe to reduce social distancing requirements to significantly less than the current best practice standard of 6 feet apart. Staff and students will be required to wear a mask/face covering.



When we return this school year, the schedules will remain fixed as some families will continue to elect to have their child learn remotely. The sample schedules indicated under the Remote Learning section will remain in effect for the year, regardless of which learning model is implemented.

Due to social distancing requirements, we may need to continue to use various buildings that have not been used for classroom purposes (e.g., the gym and cafeteria).

Students are to attend their regular academic subject areas and specialist subjects. Hands-on learning and application of skills are a primary focus of the instructional activities, and projects, workshop model learning are often used as well. Assessments (formal and informal) will be given during in-person learning. TLC will also continue to monitor the social-emotional well-being of our students through a higher level of support from the counseling and clinical staff. Trauma-informed techniques and approaches will continue to be implemented during the year.

D. HYBRID LEARNING MODEL

HYBRID LEARNING-

A hybrid model will have students alternating between in-person and remote learning on alternate days of the week. For example, (Note: this is an example and the final schedule may be altered):

Group A: “Blue Group”	Group B: “Green Group”
In-person: Monday & Tuesday	In-person: Thursday & Friday.
Remotely: Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	Remotely: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday

For the hybrid school plan, 6 goals pertaining to **instruction** and **support** for our educational staff, students, and their families/guardians have been identified. As we gathered details and information from staff and families, as well as guidelines from various agencies, we monitored how to address these goals.

Results from our July survey indicate that **at least 51% of families prefer hybrid learning in the fall**, given what we know about COVID-19. For now, our focus is on the framework of the model, and the details will follow.

There are many additional details that are either under development or noted elsewhere in this Plan. Here is what you can expect from the Hybrid Learning Model—

1. Families will be contacted regarding the offered in-person start date which will be in phases beginning November 2 for MPS. Walden School commuting students will be phased beginning October 12.
2. The PreK-12 student population will be divided into two cohorts: Cohort A “Blue” and Cohort B “Green” groups.
3. The Blue cohort will include 50% of students who will learn remotely through synchronous and asynchronous experiences. The Green cohort will include the other 50% of the PreK-12 student population. Both cohorts will attend school in-person 2 days per week. All students and staff will be engaged remotely on Wednesdays.
4. Cohorts will be diverse, inclusive, and heterogeneous (mixed ability groups). The learning students do during the in-person days will be the same for both cohorts. The learning students do during the remote days will be the same for both cohorts.
5. As DESE recommended in their guidance, the return of students to in-person instruction will follow the criteria of high-needs and the youngest students first.



6. Every Wednesday through at least April, 2021 or the start of Phase 4 (whichever comes first when it is safe to do so), ALL PreK-12+ students will be on a half-day early release schedule as follows:
 - Marie Philip and Walden School students will participate in asynchronous learning, using online platforms and project-based learning activities on all Wednesday afternoons through April 26, 2021 or the start of Phase 4;
 - Marie Philip and Walden School staff will participate in half-day Professional Development sessions on one Wednesday per month, beginning in January 2021.
 - In this remote learning and hybrid learning environment, half days for teachers on Wednesday will allow for a thorough cleaning of school buildings, additional and ongoing training and for all PreK-12 educators. Classroom assistants will be available to provide additional 1:1 support for those students who need this type of support, without taking away from their regular class schedule.

Some classes will be held outside when possible. Students will be grouped in cohorts whenever possible, with cohorts staying within one building when possible. Desks will be spaced no less than 3 feet apart ([following DESE mandates](#)) or 6 feet apart (following CDC guidance) and facing forward. Given that our students are deaf we will also arrange student desks in a manner that allows for communication/clear sight lines. Students' desks and other surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day with cleaning products supplied by TLC. Teachers will be working in teams to support the student 'pods' to reduce the movement between rooms and buildings. We are assigning specialists (speech and language pathologists, counselors, ASL specialists) who often do 1:1 work with students to work with students within a building. Many of these specialists have a varied group of students and this will be altered to reflect the current need of reducing movement between buildings.

Many of our Elementary and Secondary curriculum materials (e.g., Reading Wonders, Mirrors and Windows, Discovery Science, Glencoe Math, Math Expressions, Unique Learning, BodyShop) include both text and online resources. In addition, The Learning Center for the Deaf has purchased a number of online learning resources including, but not limited to IXL, Learning A to Z, Newsela, Boardmaker online, Scholastic News Boom Cards.

It is expected that students will complete all assignments and attend any synchronous lessons during their remote learning days so they are prepared to participate in the hands-on lessons when in-person. All teachers - academic and specialists - will be assessing student progress and report cards will be issued for each term.

Students will participate in synchronous (live) sessions throughout the day with follow up time to complete independent work with the support of a teacher and/or classroom assistant. Like the typical school day, synchronous sessions will also be led by a variety of educators (e.g., classroom teacher, ASL teachers, PE teacher) and for a variety of purposes. Teachers will have scheduled times during the week where students who are working remotely join the in-person group for selected activities. Students may be working at times without constant classroom teacher support, but they may sometimes be working in small group live sessions with other educators as appropriate (e.g. 1:1 classroom aide support, specialists, counselors, or literacy specialists). Our goal is to provide the support students need, the connections to the entire class of students, while maintaining enough flexibility to make it work for families at home.

TRANSPORTATION: As TLC supports students from more than 90 towns, having clear, comprehensive plans for transportation of our students is critical. Written [Cab Procedures](#) ([also documented here](#)) and accompanying [Map](#) have been developed to identify pick-up and drop off zones for students. A [video](#) also supports this policy.



Effective April 2021, Students will be allowed to wait outdoors for their school vehicle during dismissal time, with 3-feet of space in between. All students will be outdoors waiting, not inside classrooms waiting. Students will be supervised by staff outdoors and will also wear masks.

Secondary-specific:

A cohort model for grouping as recommended by DESE, to minimize interaction among a large number of students, may limit educational opportunities in terms of electives. Secondary students may have fewer offerings of electives and career technical education (CTE) classes (HS) and enrichment classes (MS). These classes are more likely to be offered through a teacher remotely even if students are on campus.

**Update January 2021:* Since the start of the hybrid model on October 29, more than half of Secondary families have opted to continue with remote learning for their child(ren). This has impacted the opportunities for in-person peer interaction for those students who do attend in-person learning. In addition, the majority of classes must be taught using a fully remote approach, in order to ensure consistent education for students who are fully remote as well as students who are hybrid. In order to address these unforeseen challenges, starting January 11, 2021, in-person cohorts for Secondary students will be changed to provide more opportunities for peer interaction. Students will be grouped with peers following given room capacities while they attend classes remotely, and will be able to eat lunch in the cafeteria on at least one of their in-person days following cafeteria capacity and safety protocols. Teachers will identify opportunities to provide face-to-face instruction for in-person students. Note: Students in Functional Academics classrooms will continue with their current cohorts.

Updated April 26, 2021: Secondary students will return to five day in person learning. Families may still choose remote learning for the remainder of the academic year. Models of in person instruction are found on page 16. When a family decides to return to in-person learning, they cannot opt back out to remote learning for the remainder of the academic year.

Career Technical Education (CTE): The CTE format will change due to the fact that resuming previous activities could raise potential risk of mitigating the virus (i.e. recycling, cleaning school buildings, laundry for various school programs, cooking, use of common tools such as hand tools, video cameras, the computer lab). We will tailor instruction to be more project-based to reflect the foundational skills expected from these courses.

E. REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

REMOTE LEARNING-

The remote learning model is a 100% remote learning model and includes no in-person instruction. Staff and students are expected to participate in both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. During periods of remote learning, students are expected to follow a set schedule and log in at designated times each day for lessons, instruction, classwork, etc.

Continued participation in the Full Remote Learning plan even after the Hybrid Model begins is designed specifically to respond to the needs of those students' families who are immunocompromised. Results from our July survey indicate that **approximately 45% of families prefer some form of remote learning in the**



fall, given what we know about COVID-19. These respondents shared concerns about the health of their child or family members in high-risk categories.

Students engaged in remote learning will be assigned in cohorts so when the hybrid model starts in October (for WS) and November (for MPS) starts, we will continue with uninterrupted instruction. Instruction will have both synchronous and asynchronous experiences. Teaching staff and specialists will be working from their classroom or office spaces while students begin the school year remotely. We wish to have our staff become acclimated to the new ‘normal’ and to become fully accustomed to the expectations and routines before bringing students back. We are assigning spaces that may require some staff to move their items to a new space in order to comply with the social distancing requirements.

Our remote learning schedules will be full days of instruction that will include increased synchronous instruction time with students and a daily schedule for ECC and Elementary that resembles an in-school schedule. We recognize that an established schedule will allow for more structure and predictability. The Secondary program will follow a fixed schedule this year. For the middle and high school schedules, the teachers will provide 15-20 minutes of synchronous instruction (live) and 15-20 minutes of asynchronous instruction (students and staff may still be logged in, but students will be doing hands-on or independent work, not necessarily screen-based) for each block. ECC and Elementary Remote and Hybrid schedules will include movement and mask breaks for students and setup/hygiene breaks for teaching staff that are naturally woven into an in-person school day.

Each teacher will be assigned a classroom assistant for the year, which typically does not occur in the older grades. This will allow the classroom assistants to support the teachers and to assist with 1:1 support and help with needed.

The Learning Center for the Deaf uses Google Classroom as our learning platform, with all of our Elementary and Secondary students having accounts. Our Educational Technologist is responsible for training and supporting our students and staff in using this platform. In addition to using Google Meet, our students and staff use Zoom for video conferencing as it is more user friendly for larger groups of deaf individuals.

Sample Learning Schedules

ECC Sample Learning Schedule

8:00 - 8:30	Morning Meeting
8:40 - 9:00	ASL
9:10 - 9:40	Literacy/Story Time
9:40 - 10:20	Literacy Centers - Interactive
10:20 - 11:20	Gross Motor/Fine Motor
11:20 - 12:20	Lunch and Recess
12:20 - 1:00	Math
1:10 - 1:40	Science/SS (Exploration and Experimentation)
1:40 - 2:20	Project Time
2:20 - 2:30	Wrap-up/Social Language/Dismissal

Elementary (1-5) Sample Learning Schedule



8:00 - 8:30	Morning Meeting
8:40 - 10:00	ELA
10:10-11:10	Mathematics
11:20-12:00	Science/Social Studies
12:00-12:45	Lunch & Recess
12:45-1:30	Specials (Art, PE, Library)
1:40-2:20	ASL/Deaf Studies/Health
2:20 - 2:30	Transition to dismissal

Secondary Sample Learning Schedule

Middle School		High School	
Block H	8:00-8:43	Block A	8:00-8:43
Block B	8:45-9:28	Block B	8:45-9:28
Block C	9:30-10:13	Block C	9:30-10:13
Block D	10:15-10:58	Block D	10:15-10:58
lunch	11:00-11:28	Block E	11:00-11:43
Block E	11:30-12:13	Block F	11:45-12:28
Block F	12:15-12:58	lunch	12:30-12:58
Block G	1:00-1:43	Block G	1:00-1:43
Block A	1:45-2:30	Block H	1:45-2:30

Families will be made aware of any changes to the weekly plans each Friday, which will preview the instructional plans, morning meetings/advisory meetings, and student learning for the following week.

This section provides further insight into the current model under which we have been operating. A teacher survey was conducted and we received 42 responses, 45% of those surveyed. The survey focuses on the teacher’s needs and experiences with remote learning and it provides helpful information in closing the gaps and seeing where training is needed. The survey results can be found [here](#).

TO START THE YEAR

Back-to-School will necessarily look very different this year, as we are cautiously following the state’s COVID metrics, and plan to continue remote learning and stagger their return back on campus. We are arranging for all students’ families to come by the campus prior to the start of school to pick up their ‘school bag’ which contains their 1:1 electronic device, workbooks, and other supplies. For those families who are unable to come on campus, arrangements will be made to drop off the bags to their homes.

For communicating asynchronously with students, sharing assignments, and collecting assignments, teachers will be using a variety of means including, among others, email, SeeSaw and Google Classroom. These platforms will be available, where applicable, in the 1:1 electronic devices. Google Classroom has been used effectively at the secondary level (prior to the emergency school closure last spring) and both staff and students are very familiar with how it works. The primary tool for delivering synchronous instruction in a remote setting, both for students in the Hybrid Model and for those in the Remote Learning, from classroom teachers, specialists and support staff, will be Zoom. This tool provides the capacity for teachers to live stream lessons and to have students participate in monitored breakout sessions.

Annually, educational staff review and discuss DESE related regulations and policies prior to students return. Due to the pandemic, additional training on safety and precautions in reducing the spread of infection will be provided.



ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are exploring a number of ways to offer students social engagement and support in their learning, including:

- All support services available to students in a typical school setting will be provided in the remote learning model, including services indicated in the child's IEP. These services will look different than they would in the typical school setting, as we will be utilizing teletherapy and other innovative approaches to make sure students are receiving the appropriate support to be successful in learning. TLC will identify designated spaces for specialists and the school psychologist to be able to provide assessments if determined a necessity. The duration and length of services provided will mirror the service delivery indicated in the IEP.
- TLC aims to follow best practices (example: [WIDA](#)) for all student assessments;
- There will be an increase of social-emotional supports for our students from behavioral health members within TLC. We are arranging for check-ins, counseling sessions, self-care tips, and participation in morning meetings. We will also provide basic training to classroom assistants who can provide minimal social support for students and to track concerning behaviors or comments to notify the counseling staff.

PARENT COMMUNICATION:

Parent communication is an integral part of our educational programs. The Superintendent, Walden School Executive Director, and principals send weekly email communications to families. These communications are presented in ASL, written English, and translated into Portuguese, Spanish, and French. Key materials shared with families, including forms, are also translated. In addition, all students are assigned following teachers (ECC and Elementary) or Advisors (Secondary). Each following teacher or advisor is responsible for no more than five students/families. This individual maintains regular communication with families to ensure that our students have the necessary resources and support. They also provide one main point of contact for families, which has mitigated stress during this global pandemic.

During our remote learning period during the spring of 2020, our teachers communicated with families through phone, email, or text at least twice each week. This proved to be a positive experience for all involved and will continue to be our policy going forward. Our educators use a variety of mobile apps to communicate with all families (e.g., text messages, Instagram, Seesaw and Remind apps). When communicating with families who do not speak English, our teachers have used videophone with Spanish translations, Baystate Interpreter Services (voice interpreters) and the Talking Points app which translates texts into numerous languages.

In addition to our teachers, we have counselors responsible for each department who are also available to support our students and families.

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING

Students will be expected to join into synchronous learning opportunities every day, regardless if learning remotely or as part of the hybrid learning model. If a student does not attend the Morning Meeting or Advisory, parents/guardians will be contacted to determine whether the student is absent. Parents will also be contacted if a student fails to participate in scheduled activities during the school day. As during a typical school year, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact their child's Principal if their child will be absent from learning activities.

All Marie Philip and Walden School students will receive quarterly progress reports as mandated by their IEPs.

Elementary students will be monitored on their progress towards and mastery of Massachusetts Frameworks learning standards. Teachers will maintain standards-based portfolios of student work that they will share with families. This plan is similar to what has been done during in-school learning.



The majority of our Secondary (Middle and High School) students will receive letter grades for all classes in their schedule. This may not be the case for our students with significant disabilities. For example, our functional academic students will receive grades of pass or fail. Teachers will make every effort to avoid failing a student, and in most cases will give students an incomplete, and work with them to develop a plan to bring their grade at least up to a C.

SWITCHING INTO THE REMOTE LEARNING MODEL

If it becomes necessary to switch back to the full Remote Learning plan after beginning the Hybrid Model due to a student's new illness or immunocompromised status of a student or within the family, it will be made swiftly with as little disruption to student learning and routines as possible.

F. OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME PLAN

TLC recognizes the importance of mental health and social emotional supports; school counselors and social workers will be available to provide support for students. School faculty and staff will make referrals to Walden Community Services or other appropriate external agencies as needed. The IT department will be available remotely to help troubleshoot TLC issued devices.

Our residential students will continue to receive instruction in independent living skills and to receive academic and language support from residential counselors after school hours.

In light of recent events and a national movement to fight for racial justice, it is even more critical that our students are provided additional learning opportunities through which we can engage in meaningful discussions on anti-racism, provide mental health support, and help to prepare our young people to bring about the changes our world desperately needs.

G. STUDENT SUPPORTS AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Professional Development:

During the first week back, all staff members will engage in training, then the following week, all staff will engage in training in the afternoon from 1:00pm - 4:00 pm. Starting September 9th, we will have half-days on Wednesdays to address professional development until April 2021. Professional Development will include, but not limited to: Instructional methodology through remote/hybrid, Assessment, Social & Emotional supports, and Racial Equity and Inclusion. Beginning April 28, 2021, students will return to five full days of instruction and staff professional development Wednesday afternoons will end *except* for May 12, June 9 and July 14 (subject to change). On those dates, students will be dismissed at Noon.

Push-In Services:

When we are in hybrid mode - the Walden School and Marie Philip School counseling teams will utilize push in models to support the classroom when needed. These push-in models will provide a student additional support to be able to continue or resume classroom instruction.

If school staff notice a student is struggling at home or in the classroom and needs more support, a referral can be made to Walden Community Services.

The Walden Community Services program at TLC provides culturally and linguistically appropriate treatment and family stabilization for families with a deaf and/or hard of hearing family member. Our strength-based, individualized, and evidence-based approach supports youth and families through therapeutic mentoring services, in-home therapy and intensive care coordination. For more information about these services, please visit [About Walden Community Services](#), or



[Behavioral Health Online Referral](#) to request an evaluation and eligibility for services.

Assessments:

When school resumes this fall, classroom teachers will use a variety of curriculum-based measurements (e.g., end of year math program assessments, IXL diagnostic assessment, Unique Learning benchmark assessments) and check-lists (e.g., Bedrock vocabulary, Visual Communication and Sign Language Checklist (VCSL)) to assess their students' academic performance and collect baseline data. When we begin hybrid learning, teachers in Elementary and Secondary departments will administer the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessment to all second grade through high school students who can access this assessment.

I. CERTIFICATE OF HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Districts will need to certify that they meet the final health and safety requirements issued by DESE, which can be downloaded from the following below. TLC will certify that all the requirements are met.

- [Initial Fall School Reopening Guidance](#)
- [Comprehensive Special Education Guidance](#)
- [Protocols for responding to COVID-19 scenarios in school, on the bus, or in community settings](#)
- [Fall Reopening Transportation Guidance](#)
- [Fall Reopening Facilities and Operations Guidance](#)
- [Guidance for Courses Requiring Additional Safety Considerations for Fall 2020](#)
- [Career/Vocational Technical Education Reopening Guidelines](#)

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING SAFETY POLICIES

According to the DESE who has engaged in discussions with infectious disease physicians, other medical advisers, and the COVID-19 Command Center's Medical Advisory Board – based on current data and research – the medical community supports the return of our students to in-person learning, with appropriate health and safety guardrails in place. **With adherence to a comprehensive set of critical health and safety requirements, we can bring our students, staff, and families safely back to school as soon as possible.**

Most of us are now quite familiar with the critical health and safety practices that reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. These include rigorous hygiene and handwashing, use of masks/face coverings, physical distancing, reducing interaction between groups, staying home when sick, protecting those most vulnerable to the disease, and expanding testing and tracing capabilities, among others.

However, what can often get lost in long lists of practices is that it is not one mitigation strategy, but a *combination* of all these strategies taken together that will substantially reduce the risk of transmission. **In other words, establishing a culture of health and safety in our schools that focuses on regularly enforcing these important practices is more important than any one measure.**

STUDENTS' HEALTH AND SAFETY

This guidance is intended, first and foremost, to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of students, teachers, other school staff, their families, and communities. The unique and critical role that schools play makes them a priority for opening and remaining open, enabling students to receive both academic instruction and support as well as critical services.



Returning to school in fall 2020 poses new challenges for schools, including implementing mitigation measures (e.g., social distancing, cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, use of cloth face coverings), addressing social, emotional, and mental health needs of students, addressing potential learning loss, and preparing for the probability of COVID-19 cases within the broader school community. This document is intended to articulate the strategies TLC is putting in place to mitigate the transmission of coronavirus as the school programs reopen and serves as a reminder that it is a combination of strategies as opposed to one specific strategy.

General Attendance Guidelines

- Student and staff health considerations will be followed before coming to school.
- Students and staff must stay home if they do not feel well. We have created a [Flow Chart](#) for parent guidance in determining whether to send their child to school. This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We will relax the rules on attendance to ensure that we are not placing an undue burden on families to have their children report to school when sick. The State may release guidance on attendance requirements in the future.
- Students and staff with a temperature above 100.4 degrees should not attend school until they have been fever-free (under 100.4 degrees) for 24 hours days and without the use of antipyretic medication, such as Tylenol, Motrin, Advil, or Ibuprofen.
- Students and sick staff members should not return to school until they have met the criteria established by the Massachusetts Department of Health (MPDH) to [discontinue home isolation](#) and [quarantine](#). Students and staff will check with their school nurse prior to returning as well. A safe return to school is based on symptoms, duration of symptoms, test results, and clearance which will be described in further detail in a later section.

ROLE OF THE FAMILY/GUARDIAN:

Families, in consultation with their medical providers, will ultimately make the decision as to whether their child will attend in-person instruction, continue with remote learning, or a hybrid model. DESE has determined that parents can make the decision to send their child back to school for in person learning and if choose not to for any reason, the school is still responsible for providing remote learning to that child. Additionally, the school is responsible for providing remote education for any child who attends in person school, but then needs to remain at home because of illness.

Families also play a critical role in supporting the new culture of health and safety by encouraging mask use in school, on the bus, and in the community. Most importantly, families can help mitigate the transmission of COVID- 19 in their school communities by checking their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keeping them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with a person who is sick and/or diagnosed with COVID-19.

REQUIRED STUDENT FORMS:

TLC has required a series of electronic or printed forms for all returning TLC students. These forms are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French and are necessary to ensure acknowledgement of student health and emergency information, attestation to arriving on campus only if healthy and free of any signs and symptoms of COVID or related illness, and a commitment to both remote and in-person learning models, including a 1:1 device agreement and option for remote-only learning. Back to school forms include:

- [Student Emergency Information](#)
- [Student Medical Permissions](#) and [Residential Medical Permissions](#)



- [Student Photo/Video Permission](#)
- [Student 1:1 Technology Device Agreement](#)
- [Remote Learning Opt-In](#) and [Return to Hybrid Learning](#)

Additional resources for families can be found on our website at: <https://www.tlcdeaf.org/coronavirus>

COVID-19 SAFETY AND STANDARDS POLICY

This COVID-19 Safety Standards Policy (the “Policy”) is intended to provide instruction related to the steps The Learning Center for the Deaf (TLC) has taken to implement these workplace safety standards and what is expected of employees, students and clients when returning to the workplace. These safety standards are categorized into four categories:

- Social Distancing
- Face Coverings
- Hygiene Protocols
- Staffing and Operations
- Cleaning and Disinfecting

The Policy is subject to change or modifications at TLC’s discretion, consistent with or as may be required, by pandemic-related laws or guidance. The success of our return to work/school action plan relies on how well individuals follow social distancing and health and safety protocols.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this Policy, please contact the following COVID-Response Team Leader Sarah Glenn-Smith, CEO, or members of the COVID-19 Response Team [here](#).

SOCIAL DISTANCING PLAN

Employees, students and clients should follow social distancing best practices while at all TLC facilities, including but not limited to workstations, cafeterias, gymnasium, common areas, break rooms, library, front office, and administrative spaces, and while conducting TLC work in the community. Specifically, all on premises are asked to stay no less than 3 feet away from all individuals whenever possible, but ideally 6 feet apart. (Those who need to be in closer proximity due to the nature of their work, will be provided additional personal protective equipment.)

All persons, including employees, faculty, staff, students, contractors, and vendors must remain no less than 3 feet, but ideally 6 feet apart, to the greatest extent possible, both inside and outside the workplace. (Additional guidance on increased protective measures and personal protective equipment will be provided in this document to school programs where social distancing may not be possible given the nature of the services provided to students.)

FACE COVERINGS

All individuals, including employees, students, visitors, and vendors, are **required** to wear face coverings while at TLC or performing work on behalf of TLC, except where wearing a face covering is unsafe due to a medical condition, disability impact, other health or safety consideration, or a reason permissible under state guidance (while eating, or social distancing “mask breaks”). If any employee is unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability, they must contact Cristin Tagman, Human Resource Manager, to discuss a reasonable accommodation before returning to work on site or in the community.



Parents/guardians are responsible for sending their child to school every day with a face covering or mask, and washing it or replacing it daily. Provisions will be made for students who forget to bring a face covering or mask to school. Mask breaks will be given throughout the day, outside where students can maintain a six-foot distance.

TLC will provide each staff person with two **washable** face coverings for their individual use while at work. The expectation is that all staff will wear face coverings appropriately per the CDC [guidelines](#), covering their mouth and nose, on campus at all times, (except when **alone** in private office space or **alone** in a classroom). It is also expected that all TLC staff will wash their individual masks daily. On the occasional instance that an employee forgets to bring their face covering to work, they may contact their supervisor or Lynn Power, Director of Health Services, at LPower@TLCDeaf.org to use a disposable face covering for the day.

Employees, clients, students and families are reminded that, in order to protect their family members, close contacts, and TLC colleagues, whenever they are in public, both in and out of the workplace, the Governor's Safer-at-Home [Advisory](#) states that "all residents of Massachusetts are REQUIRED to cover their face when they cannot maintain six feet of social distance in public." This serves as a reminder that your actions outside of work can impact the TLC Community.

Per guidance from the CDC [here](#), employees should wear face coverings properly by wearing the face covering over their nose and mouth and securing it under their chin so that it fits snugly against the sides of the face, while making sure they can still breath properly. Given recent CDC guidance, neck gaiters and bandanas are not considered an appropriate face covering. Face coverings should not be around the neck or up on the forehead. After touching the face covering, all should clean their hands as described in the Hygiene Protocols.

Face coverings should also be removed carefully, while away from others, by untying the strings behind their head or stretching the ear loops, folding outside corners together, and storing them in a place away from others in the workplace. Face coverings should be washed in a washing machine after each use, and hands should be washed with soap and water after handling face coverings.

HYGIENE PROTOCOLS

According to the CDC, COVID-19 is believed to spread from person to person and the following measures are critical to prevent the spread of the virus.

Hand washing and sanitizing: All individuals will be required to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds upon arrival to campus in the morning.

All individuals should wash their hands frequently throughout the day after coming into contact with any shared surface throughout the workspace and building, before and after taking off face coverings, as well as before and after breaks and meals.

TLC will make disinfectant and other cleaning products available to employees and will ensure high touch areas, such as shared equipment, doorknobs, etc. are cleaned and disinfected regularly.

Before and after using a shared surface or equipment, such as a shared computer, conference table, copy machine, etc., employees are expected to wipe down the surface and/or equipment with a disinfectant wipe or other available cleaning product.

Additionally, individuals must:

- Distance themselves from anyone who appears to be sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your forearm and elbow; do not use your hands



- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. If you do, wash your hands immediately.
- Avoid physical contact with others. Do not shake hands or even fist or elbow bump.
- Wash your mask daily.
- Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others when possible.
- Individuals should only enter and exit through designated entryways and avoid gathering in these spaces.
- Follow any posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
- Disinfect their workspace/classroom often.
- Wash hands often.
- Avoid unnecessary gatherings.
- Avoid using common areas.

Please monitor your email and adhere to any additional guidance as it is provided. All emails regarding COVID-19 updates will be titled: COVID-19 Update.

HEALTH AND SAFETY SIGNAGE (EXAMPLES):



ENHANCED CLEANING PROTOCOLS

The maintenance department, as part of their enhanced cleaning, will hire additional cleaners, have hired a cleaning supervisor, and will clean classrooms and offices more frequently, including student desktops as part of their regular cleaning responsibilities. In addition to desks, office and classroom surfaces being cleaned throughout the day, in order to reduce the potential spread of coronavirus, classroom teachers and assistants will clean desks and other high touch surfaces in the classroom throughout the day with the cleaning products provided by TLC.

It is important to eliminate the sharing of common classroom items. All water, sand, sensory tables and related activities will be removed. Water fountains/coolers will be closed, with additional options for filling personal water bottles provided. All shared plush toys, pillows, blankets, etc. must be removed from classrooms and sensory rooms.

STUDENT HEALTH SCREENING

The CDC has identified the following as symptoms of COVID-19: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever of 100.4 degrees or greater, chills, muscle pain fatigue, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. If your child has any of these symptoms, **they must stay home and immediately contact the nursing department at 508-879-5110 x390 or VP: 774-999-0970.**

A Parent Attestation form found [here](#) is required to be signed and returned whether students are hybrid or remote learning, and must be returned before any student can return to on-campus learning. A request at the beginning of the school year asked caregivers to complete this form only once; however, policies shifted in February 2021, and TLC now asks parents to complete the attestation form **every day** their child is to come to campus to ensure the health of the students arriving on campus.



Prior to coming to school, a self-screen must be done at home checking for the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal symptoms, new loss of taste/smell, muscle aches, or any other symptoms that feel like a cold. If a parent/family sends their child to school, they are attesting to:

1. Today or in the past 24 hours, **my child has not, nor any household members have not**, exhibited any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever (temperature of 100.4 F or above), felt feverish/warm, or had chills
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Gastrointestinal symptoms (diarrhea, nausea, vomiting)
 - Fatigue
 - Headache
 - New loss of smell/taste
 - New muscle aches
 - Any other signs of illness.
2. In the past 14 days, my child has **not** had close contact with a person known to be infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
3. In the past 14 days my child has not traveled outside of the [Low Risk States](#).
4. I have **not** given my child medicine to lower a fever.

Prior to students returning to campus, the Nursing Department and School Administration will identify **isolation areas** in each building (separate from the two nursing offices), to be used as medical isolation rooms should a student become sick while at school.

Students required to wait in the isolation area will be supervised at all times by a nurse wearing appropriate PPE. Others will not be allowed to enter the isolation area without appropriate PPE. Isolation areas will have a closed door and appropriate ventilation. Private or separate bathrooms will be made available for use by sick individuals only. Standard and droplet precautions will be followed by the school nurse. The isolation areas must not be reoccupied again until the areas have been deep cleaned after to prevent cross-contamination.

A school nurse will contact the parent/guardian to pick up their child at a designated outside location on campus. Students will not be allowed to leave school on the bus or cab if contraindicated as determined by the school nurse. A separate exit will be used from the regular exit for those students being discharged with a suspected infection. The Nursing Department will create a handout of information of recommended steps to follow before their child can return to school. The handouts may vary depending on the situation.

If a student arrives at school not feeling well, a school nurse will assess the student and determine if the child may enter the classroom, or be isolated and sent home. If the nursing staff determines that a child is symptomatic and must go home before the end of the school day, the nurse will contact the parents/guardians to pick up their child within 30 – 60 minutes of the call. A school nurse will follow-up with parents/guardians for absences for more than 2 consecutive days or when the nurse deems appropriate.

The school nurse will determine when the child started to experience symptoms and factor in the two days prior to the onset when determining who had close contact with the child. Those in [close contact](#) with the student will be made aware of possible exposure. All personal health information about your child will be kept confidential and released **ONLY** on a need to know basis.



If any student has been [exposed](#) to COVID-19, regardless of symptoms, the child must not be permitted to return to the school program and if already present, must be sent home. If a child has been exposed to a sick or symptomatic person, the following protocols must be followed:

1. The child must not be permitted to come to school and must be sent home if already on campus.
2. Exposed students must stay home for 14 days after the last day of contact with the person who is sick.
3. If an exposed child or staff subsequently tests positive or their doctor confirms they have COVID-19, the child must stay home for a minimum of 10 days from the 1st day of the symptoms AND appear to be fever-free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications AND experience significant improvements in symptoms. Release from isolation is under the jurisdiction of the local board of health where the student resides.
4. If a child's household member tests positive for COVID-19, the child must quarantine for 14 days after the last time they could have been exposed.
5. The Nursing Department is available for families to call and discuss individual situations about each child.
 - a. VP: 774-999-0970 or
 - b. cell: 774-279-0083
 - c. 508-879-5110 x390

PROTOCOLS FOR RESPONDING TO A POTENTIAL STUDENT EXPOSURE

In the event that a student has potentially been exposed to COVID-19, TLC will follow protocols as outlined in this reopening plan. A dynamic [checklist of criteria](#) has been developed and will be executed by leadership, education and nursing teams to ensure all potential contacts are documented and contact tracing is thorough. Additional communication plans have been developed and will be executed by Administration, Education and the Communications Department when applicable.

UPDATED STUDENT INFORMATION REQUIRED

IMMUNIZATIONS/PROOF OF PHYSICAL EXAM

All parents/guardians have been notified that it is mandatory that updated immunization records and proof of a recent (within one year) physical examination for their child must be submitted to the nursing department prior to their child starting school. Students who participate in fully remote instruction are not exempt from this policy and there will be no exceptions. The school nurse will review the current immunizations of every student before the start of school. Parents/guardians have also been notified by the school nurse to submit their child's doctors' orders prior to the school year and written parental permission to administer medication.

For students requiring nebulizer treatments and tracheostomy care, a separate space will be identified and protocol will be developed in conjunction with the prescribing providers and the school nurse.

EMERGENCY FORMS

All signed emergency forms must be completed and received by the Nursing Department **prior** to the start of the school year.

MEDICATION DROP OFF TO CAMPUS

In order to provide a safe, no-contact way to drop off medication to campus, there is a medication drop box located at the cab drop off area. Any medication to be dropped off by a parent or cab driver will be dropped off in that medication drop box. The nursing department will arrange for medication pick up from the box.



MEALS

All meals will be eaten outside whenever possible and in classrooms when outside eating is not an option. If classrooms are used for meals, classroom staff will clean the desks where each student is eating before and after meals. Students will wash their hands before and after eating. Students must be six feet apart when eating. Both breakfast and lunches will be a “grab-and-go” variety with disposable, individually wrapped plasticware, and require no refrigeration. Students are allowed to bring food from home as long as it does not require refrigeration or heating via microwave. The school nurses will provide a list of students with food allergies to each class. Students are not allowed to share food with anyone.

PLAYGROUND AND RECESS

Playgrounds will be used on a rotating basis, by small groups of children, and social distancing will be maintained. Toys and equipment will be cleaned by staff on the playground after each use. If equipment cannot be cleaned in between children, it will be closed until social distancing is no longer required. Additional outdoor space on campus for use during recess and break time includes part of the TLC parking lot as designated by Administration. See video [here](#).

CLASSROOM PETS

During this phase, no animals/pets should be permitted in the classrooms or on campus with the exception of certified therapy dogs.

FIELD TRIPS

For the foreseeable future, there will be no field trips. Once fieldtrips are resumed, there will be additional guidance issued on how to safely resume field trips.

LIBRARY

The library will be available to staff by appointment only. Staff can email the librarian and request materials to be prepared for no-contact pick-up. All books being returned are to be placed in bins just outside the library and quarantined (following the protocols that are in place at the time of re-opening). The librarian will deliver books and materials by request to classes. A drop off location will be set for each building in order to minimize the number of people in each building.

TRANSPORTATION

In most cases, student transportation to and from TLC is the responsibility of the sending school districts. There are situations where a parent will transport a student to and from campus. When on campus learning resumes, there will be a comprehensive drop off/pick up plan that incorporates and accommodates both transportation companies and parents. Included in that plan will be safety guidelines for staff who do “cab duty” and need to assist students buckling students and assisting students getting in and out of vans/cabs.

ATHLETICS

As described in the reopening phases detailed previously in this document, there will be no athletics for at least the first phase of reopening. When athletics resume, there will be a comprehensive plan for all sports that will incorporate safety precautions for youth sports available at the time.

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH REOPENING CONSIDERATIONS

TLC understands that living through the COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress and anxiety levels for everyone. Being home since the middle of March without preparation that school would be closed for several months has had a tremendous impact on students. The well-being of students and their families, some with additional family stress, challenges of remote learning, lack of structure, social isolation, and language barriers leading to further language deprivation, has taken a toll. And for some, their environment included a loved one getting sick or dying, food insecurity, or perhaps witnessing situations that have significant impact on their mental health. Due to the significant stressors students likely experienced, consideration has been given to



mental health needs as reopening plans were developed. TLC staff will work collaboratively between departments and with students and families to provide social-emotional support for students to thrive during the coming school year, including attending to students' basic psychological needs prior to diving into more traditional academic content. Specific time will be set aside at the start of school to reflect and reconnect.

We will all be learning how to function within this new educational landscape, and to that end, TLC staff will orient themselves and their students to the new norms of the physical and digital environments in which we will operate. This orientation will include explicit instruction in health and safety protocols.

In addition to the global pandemic, the public health crisis of racial injustice, the constant media and social media accounts of violence against members of the Black Community, and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, has a significant impact on TLC students, particularly students who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). There are multiple layers of additional concerns that are being addressed currently and will continue to be addressed and supported throughout the next school year.

The interdisciplinary clinical team, comprised of clinicians from Walden School, Marie Philip School, and Walden Community Services, has developed plans to address the mental health needs of students.

With information received from the Adverse Childhood Experience Questionnaire, students will be divided into three levels determined by results of the ACE-Q and identified level of support needed. Please refer to the links below to see the rationale and plan.

- a. **ACE-Q Assessments-** Families/caregivers will receive this assessment prior to students' return to school to help gauge the student's functioning.
- b. **ACE-Q Assessment Plan** An internal document with the rationale for the ACE-Q assessment.

The interdepartmental clinical team will set up groups for students to have the opportunity to process their experiences while being in quarantine. The groups will likely be determined by student 'pods' they are in.

When school resumes remotely and in a hybrid model, clinical teams will continue to meet to ensure the ongoing support of all students. We aim to provide an informal way for students to connect and lean on each other by having group dialogues about various experiences that have impacted them.

Additionally, the clinical teams will meet with educational leaders to analyze and revise disciplinary protocol to align with best practice and with a mental health lens. Consideration will be given to having an additional staff person available throughout the day to serve as a support person for students who are struggling with maintaining their behavior in class.

MARIE PHILIP SCHOOL DORM

The Marie Philip School (MPS) dormitories are scheduled to reopen during Phase 3 of the plan but is subject to change, pending the advisement of state officials, families and TLC Administration. During Phase 1 and 2 of the reopening plan, residential staff will provide daily ILS activities via remote learning after 2:30, Monday through Thursday. Residential staff will develop lesson plans, create resources and activities accessible to students on the Residential Google Classroom site. Residential staff will also provide weekly 1:1 meetings with residential students until the dormitories open. ***As of 3/13/21**, the reopening of the MPS dorms have been postponed pending confirmation from students' families and health clearance. A tentative date has been set for March 17, but is subject to change. Plans indicate students may begin with a three-day residence to begin.



STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Screening of Symptoms of COVID-19: The CDC has identified the following as symptoms of COVID-19: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever of 100.4 degrees or greater, chills, muscle pain fatigue, headache, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. If an employee is suffering from any of these symptoms, **must stay home** and should contact Cristin Tagman, HR Manager, at CTagman@TLCDeaf.org immediately for further guidance. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness, should immediately seek medical attention and follow the guidance of a health care provider. Employees are **required** to self-identify and inform TLC if experiencing symptoms. This information will be kept strictly confidential and will be shared only on a need to know basis with critical people responsible for enacting safety measures. Employees who have been diagnosed with or are aware they've been directly exposed to COVID-19 **must** notify HR. This information will be kept confidential and will only be shared with those who need to know.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING, EXPOSURE, AND CONFIRMED ILLNESS PROTOCOLS

Keeping employees safe is TLC's top priority. To accomplish this task, TLC has created various procedures for screening employees who return to work, dealing with COVID-19 exposure, responding to a confirmed case of COVID-19, and reporting transparency.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING PROTOCOLS

TLC will implement screening to attempt to prevent the spread of the virus. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission permits employers to measure employees body temperatures before allowing them to enter the worksite. TLC reserves the right to implement a screening protocol for symptoms, such as temperature checks and/or signed certifications, at any point. Employee screenings will be implemented on a nondiscriminatory basis, and all information collected will be treated as confidential medical information—specifically, the identity of workers exhibiting a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms will only be shared with members of TLC management on a need to know basis.

TLC employees will be asked to confirm the status of their health by completing an initial COVID-19 Exposure Questionnaire.

Employees unwilling to complete a screening or comply with safety protocol will be required to leave TLC property and immediately follow up with their supervisor as well as Human Resources.

Employees whose temperature is above 100.4 or is having symptoms of illness will be asked to leave work immediately.

The following screening process is required all employees:

Each employee will be asked every day to complete a daily COVID-19 Screening Form on an app, and answer ALL questions prior to entering any TLC facilities at the beginning of each shift/day and prior to beginning any work in the community. Employees will get immediate results on the application, using the following symbols:

It's OKAY TO GO TO WORK



DO NOT GO TO WORK



Results will be recorded and filed separately from personnel records and will be kept confidential following HIPAA regulations



Daily Self-Screening and Temperature-Taking Requirements: Prior to starting their work day, each employee:

1. Must not have experienced any of the symptoms of COVID-19 identified by the CDC.
2. Must not have had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. (Close contact means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

REQUIRED EMPLOYEE NOTIFICATION

Employees who begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while at work (on or off campus): Anyone having symptoms while at TLC must immediately isolate themselves from other people and inform Cristin Tagman, HR Manager and their supervisor. The employee will be asked to leave work immediately. Employees who are sent home must not use public transportation. TLC will work with you to arrange alternative transportation, such as from a family member, as needed. Employees who are on campus and cannot drive will wait in an assigned quarantine area while they wait for transportation. Employees sent home are asked to contact their healthcare provider immediately for medical advice and assistance. Employees who are sent home may be required to self-quarantine and are required to cooperate in any TLC contact tracing efforts.

Additional Employment: If an employee has another job outside of TLC, they should notify HR of the nature of that position to help identify any issues with potential exposure to COVID-19 and to enable improved contact tracing efforts, if applicable.

COVID-19 EXPOSURE, CONFIRMED ILLNESS, AND REPORTING TRANSPARENCY PROTOCOL

Report of COVID-19 Exposure or Positive COVID-19 Test: Any employee who tests positive for COVID-19 or believes they have been infected **must** notify TLC (Cristin Tagman, HR Manager) and will be instructed to follow the advice of a qualified medical professional and self-isolate. TLC will take appropriate measures to clean and disinfect the workplace and engage in contact tracing if necessary. If notified of an employee’s positive COVID-19 test, TLC, in accordance with statewide standards of reopening, will notify the local Board of Health (BOH) and the COVID-19 Community Tracing Collaborative (the “MA COVID Team”) [here](#) and will work with them to trace likely contacts in the workplace and advise workers, where appropriate, to isolate and self-quarantine. TLC will maintain the COVID-19 positive employee’s confidentiality, to the extent practicable, and use the information strictly to [trace likely contacts](#) in the workplace, advise workers, and plan for cleaning.

Report of Close Contact with COVID-19: If an employee has come in [close contact](#) (within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset) with someone who has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, they must notify TLC and may be asked to seek further medical attention and/or advice before being permitted to return to work.

When self-isolating, employees should:

- Stay away from other people in their home as much as possible, staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if available.
- Not allow visitors.
- Wear a face mask if they have to be around people.
- Avoid sharing household items, including drinking cups, eating utensils, towels and bedding.



- Clean high-touch surfaces daily.
- Continue monitoring their symptoms, calling their health care provider if their condition worsens.
- Maintain contact with HR to update on return to work.

Notably, employees who are symptomatic or who have tested positive should not return to work until the conditions outlined in the table below are met and they have contacted HR to begin a re-entry plan:

Return to Work Considerations	
Employee was symptomatic but was not tested for COVID-19.	Employee was tested for COVID-19.
<p>The employee may return to work if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They fulfill a 14-day quarantine; ● They have not had a fever for at least 24 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time. ● They are asymptomatic. 	<p>The employee may return to work if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● They have been fever free for 24 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time. ● They are asymptomatic. ● They have received two negative tests at least 24 hours apart. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 10 days have passed since their first positive test and they have had no symptoms since receiving that test result.

REPORTING TRANSPARENCY PROTOCOL

Any TLC employee who experiences COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 must notify HR as soon as possible. The employee will be asked to assist with contact tracing. This information will be tracked separately from personnel records, and names will not be released. Depending on the circumstances, TLC will notify impacted employees if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace. The Learning Center for the Deaf may elect to close the office for a period up to 72 hours following a confirmed case to allow for cleaning and natural deactivation of the virus.

Individuals Particularly Vulnerable to COVID-19: Employees may review the CDC’s guidance [here](#) to determine whether they may be considered vulnerable to COVID-19. Employees, in collaboration with their healthcare providers, should use their best judgment to determine whether they may be particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and if determined to be, should contact Cristin Tagman, HR Manager to discuss a reasonable accommodation, where applicable. Human Resources will assess the ability to work from home, to the extent practicable and based on consultation with their supervisor and the needs of the programs.

EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

TLC understands that living through the COVID-19 pandemic has increased stress and anxiety levels for all of us, and that a return to work will increase stress for many. We take seriously the well-being of each staff person and how they are being impacted by their work, their home life, and COVID-19. We want to prioritize the mental health of our employees during these uncertain times. As such, we have made every effort to provide a safe return to work. If you need additional support, please reach out to your supervisor, a trusted colleague, the Human Resources Department or consider reaching out for help to those in your community or mental health



network to help manage stress. A list of resources for employees (internal access only) can be found here: [Mental Health Resources by HR Department](#)

Employees with concerns regarding their mental health should request additional resources from HR. TLC has an Employee Assistance Program and many other resources that may be helpful. In addition, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has provided a [website](#) for Maintaining Emotional Health and Well-Being During the COVID-19 Outbreak which provides resources and tips to support emotional health, mental health, and well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak.

ADDITIONAL EMPLOYEE SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Self-Care: Programs will create opportunities for self-care within their departments. Supervisors should:

- check-in frequently with employees
- create a schedule that allows for breaks (mask breaks and mental health breaks)
- recognize that self-care differs from one person to another
- participate in training offered by the clinical team to increase awareness on how to support staff's mental health needs

Addressing Burn-Out: Burn-out is now becoming prevalent in employees who are fulfilling their job expectations, particularly remotely, while balancing home life, in the middle of a pandemic. People are feeling more overwhelmed and less supported. TLC is increasing support to employees in order to prevent burn-out by:

- Training direct supervisors/managers/administrators in how to recognize signs of burn-out in the workplace.
- Developing training modules for teachers and staff to receive training in self-care.
- Allowing the use of PTO if an employee is at risk of burn-out (whether self-determined or evaluated by a supervisor).
- Providing debriefings for staff during department meetings where staff can share frustrations and ideas.

Leave Policy: An employee who must stay home from work due to COVID-19 who has prior approval to work remotely may do so. If an employee is not well enough to work remotely, they may use the Families First Coronavirus Response Act "[FFCRA,](#)" [Emergency Paid Sick Leave](#) or their PTO/sick/vacation as applicable. Employees who have questions about their leave options should contact Cristin Tagman, HR Manager.

See Something Say Something: TLC encourages you to let your supervisor and/or HR know if you see something that concerns you in the workplace; for example, if you are concerned that any individual, including a student, may be showing symptoms of COVID-19, or is not maintaining social distance, you are encouraged to speak to your supervisor, or Cristin Tagman, Human Resource Manager. There will be no retaliation against you for speaking to anyone at TLC about your health, including your potential exposure to COVID-19, or about any other health or safety concerns you may have. If you feel your concerns are not being acknowledged through reporting internally at TLC, the Commonwealth of MA has information on their website to file a report of [non-compliance](#).

Training: TLC will provide training to employees on proper social distancing and hygiene protocols in the workplace as well as measures employees should take to reduce disease transmission including:

- The proper use of face coverings;
- Self-screening at home, including temperature or symptom checks;



- The importance of not coming to work if ill;
- When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe;
- Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus and;
- safe and effective use of protective equipment.

At a minimum, the following protocols will be put in place:

Visitor Policy: Visitors to campus will be restricted to essential visitors or essential service providers only until it is safe to expand to additional individuals.

- All visitors and vendors will be required to wear masks at all times while on campus or TLC's satellite offices.
- Essential visitors must make an appointment prior to coming to campus.
 - Requiring essential visitors to text the main office to check in for their appointment.
 - Visitors will be asked to remain in their vehicle until entry is permitted.
- Vendors doing essential work on campus will be provided with and expected to follow the TLC COVID-19 protocols and will check in directly in the maintenance building, not in the front office.
- COVID-19 Exposure Questionnaires forms completed prior to coming on campus
- Temperature checks before coming on campus for all visitors, vendors and customers
- All non-essential visitors will meet virtually.
- Job interviews will be conducted virtually as well.

Deliveries: The Learning Center for the Deaf will set up contactless drop zones for all deliveries, including mail and packages within each department. An assigned contact person will process mail and packages and bring packages/mail to each department. Employees ordering food delivery service will need to instruct drivers to utilize drop off zones for contactless delivery.

Postings: TLC has developed a COVID-19 Control Plan outlining how its workplace will prevent/slow the spread of COVID-19 and is the required Commonwealth of MA attestation forms will be posted in the following locations: 848 Central Street, Framingham; 63 Fountain Street, Framingham; 41 Tanager St, Springfield. Additionally, TLC will display posters describing general rules for:

- hand hygiene protocols
- mask requirements
- cleaning and disinfecting
- social distancing

CONTACT LOG

To facilitate contact tracing, a log will be maintained at each location of everyone who enters the workplace, no matter how short in duration the visit may be. A log of all visitors, including those doing material drop offs, will be kept at each main office and maintained by the Administrative Assistant in each office. Each log must contain the person's name, company/affiliation, and cell phone number.

If you have non-emergency COVID-19 questions, you may call 2-1-1. You may also sign up for text message alerts related to COVID-19 by texting COVIDMA to 888-777. You may also contact the MA Department of Public Health by calling 617-624-6000.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Employees must complete the accompanying [Acknowledgement Form](#), to acknowledge receipt of this Policy, prior to returning to campus or work in the community. The receipt and the accompanying acknowledgement form are not contracts for employment. The implementation of the Policy and employee's signing of the acknowledgement form shall not impact employee's status as an at-will employee of TLC.

WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS TO FOLLOW WHEN RETURNING TO WORK

The Learning Center for the Deaf has implemented various workplace protocols designed to preserve the health and safety of our employees as they return to work. This section further explains these protocols. For additional information, please reach out to your supervisor.

Return to Work Timeline

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an exact timeline for resuming "normal" operations is not feasible. TLC will continue to monitor applicable state and local guidance and determine next steps for reopening the office.

At this time, we've created a tentative phased approach for employees to return to work. To remain consistent with federal guidance, our phased approach to reopening our campus mirrors the guidelines that the state of Massachusetts has communicated. Programs that have specific requirements for reopening (MPS WS day program, MPS dorms, Audiology, etc.) are required to follow the guidance of their licensing agencies and each reopening plan was developed aligned with those guidelines.

Gradual Opening

To promote an orderly and safe return to work, TLC will reopen the organization gradually, in well-coordinated phases, following the current MA Guidance to return to work at 40% capacity. Walden School has remained open for residential students throughout the pandemic. The Audiology clinic already had a phased reopening, first for emergency curb-side service April 27, 2020 then a limited-service reopening June 1, 2020 until it was safe to reopen for in person appointments following strict health and safety protocol, including spaced out appointments and PPE for all staff. As the remainder of TLC programs reopen, some departments will be required to continue work remotely to allow MPS and WS commuters to reintegrate back on campus. The continued staggered reopening was communicated on August 10, 2020 to all employees. The duration and timing of these phases will depend primarily on public health guidance.

Temporary access to office space critical to business operations will continue to be on an as needed basis with prior approval from the CEO, COO, and HR.

Preparing Campus Buildings

Throughout the closure, preparations were being made in buildings for eventual return to campus. The following is a brief summary; a more detailed checklist can be found [here](#).

Those checks included each buildings:

- HVAC systems (air circulation, filters). (Based on CDC Guidelines for air filtration [here](#), TLC has replaced all filters with MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.)
- Assessment of all HVAC equipment to ensure a minimum of 20% intake of outside air
- Plumbing (ensuring floor drains, sinks, and toilets are flushed to prevent sewer build up)
- Custodial needs (cleaned and sanitized each building, inspecting vacuuming equipment, identified high-touch areas, **developed appropriate increased cleaning schedule and scope of cleaning**)
- Cleaning supplies (purchased additional soap and hand sanitizer dispensers, cleaning products, sanitizing wipes).
- Signage will be installed throughout buildings indicating COVID-19 health and safety protocols.



Determinations are being made as to the capacity of each building to identify a 40% return to work capacity which will allow social distancing at least 6 feet apart for all occupants.

Preparing Campus Traffic Flow

Construction on the new driveway, access road and parking lot is complete. A full reopening traffic flow plan will be developed with the Educational Leaders and the Educational Reopening Committee to ensure students' transportation vehicles and parents who choose to drop their child off at school can easily access drop off points.

A staggered schedule for non-academic staff will be developed in order to assure a timely and smooth arrival for academic staff and students, ease entry congestion into parking lots and buildings, and promote social distancing.

While we await further information about student transportation being provided by cities and towns in the fall, we will develop contingency plans for parents to drop off students and a combination of transportation companies and parents. This plan will be communicated to all staff, parents and transportation companies prior to welcoming students back to campus.

Cleaning Protocols & Products

As we return to work and school, there will be an increase in both the scope and amount of cleaning on campus. C&W will hire additional cleaning staff. Each building will have a specific list of cleaning and disinfecting protocols for that building accessible to staff prior to re-opening. At a minimum, each building will be cleaned once per day and disinfected once per day. High touch points will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. A [checklist](#) of cleaning will be hung in each building.

C&W follows all CDC guidelines and manufacturers recommendations regarding cleaning products and protocol. All cleaning products used by C&W meet the CDC guidelines for cleaning viruses and bacteria. TLC has been maintaining an inventory of cleaning products and hand sanitizer for currently open programs and in anticipation of re-opening programs that are currently working remotely. A list of ingredients and Safety Data Sheets for each cleaning product and hand sanitizer will be provided upon request.

The Learning Center for the Deaf may elect to close the office for a period up to 72 hours following a confirmed case to allow for natural deactivation of the virus and/or to close for a longer period of time to allow for cleaning.

To help employees remain healthy, The Learning Center for the Deaf has hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes available throughout the facility. It is suggested that employees wash their hands more frequently than normal. Additionally, C&W has instructed the cleaning crew to disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles throughout the day and at a minimum twice a daily basis. Cleaning definitions are as follows:

<p>Deep Cleaning – removal of dust, debris, and dirt from surfaces by scrubbing, and washing. This includes carpet shampooing, wall cleaning, stripping/waxing, and removal of applicable stains where applicable/able. This terminology would also include disinfection of surfaces. If scheduled, all items should be off of the floor or organized to support this effort.</p>
<p>Sanitizing – reduces bacteria identified on a product's label on surfaces. This crosses over to general cleaning but, we will not call out sanitizing as it'll either be deep cleaning and/or disinfection.</p>
<p>Disinfecting – destroys or inactivates both the bacteria and viruses identified on the product's label (i.e. COVID/Influenza) on hard, nonporous surfaces. In general, we call this out when disinfecting high touch points with approved chemicals (i.e. Oxivir TB) which has been approved by the CDC and includes knobs, desks, chairs, faucets, urinals, toilets, push bars, buttons, switches, etc.</p>



Disinfecting Protocol

Employees are required to do their part to help keep the offices and classrooms as clean as possible by cleaning and disinfecting their workstations, desks and surfaces they commonly use, using the CDC guidelines for [cleaning](#). Employees should also avoid using others' workstations, tools and equipment. Additionally, whenever an employee uses a common piece of equipment (ex., printer, copier, etc.), please use the stylus that was provided to you when you returned to work. If you must touch the equipment with your hand, it should be wiped down prior to and following use. Proper cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided by TLC. Employees should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after cleaning or sanitizing a surface.

TLC will facilitate the cleaning of common areas and other frequently touched surfaces as needed. The frequency of this cleaning may change depending on the situation.

Supplies to Prevent the Spread

TLC is providing the following equipment and/or supplies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace:

- two washable masks per person
- hand sanitizer
- disinfecting wipes (Oxivir wipes)
- disinfecting spray cleaning solution (Oxivir)
- paper towels
- hand soap
- stylus to use for high touch areas (copy machines, elevator buttons, etc.,)
- other personal protective equipment (role dependent) such as face shields, gowns, etc. will be provided on an as needed basis.



Workforce Readiness

Prior to reopening, communication and mitigating the risk of COVID-19 [training](#) will be provided to all employees and will include, the capacity of each building/classroom, cleaning protocols, social distancing plans, entry points and access, and individual COVID-19 protocols, including the requirement of masks for everyone.

COVID-19 related signage will be put in multiple locations throughout campus. As required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, prior to reopening, a Reopening COVID-19 Plan must be completed and an [attestation](#) posted in each program. Additionally, using the DESE guidelines the Marie Philip School must submit a plan to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education prior to reopening and similarly, Walden School must submit a plan prior to accepting commuting students back on campus that identifies three plans: a full in person instruction plan, a hybrid plan, and a contingency fully remote plan. Prior to students returning to the MPS dorms, a reopening plan must be sent to the EEC.

A robust campaign of “Keep TLC Healthy” reminding everyone to stay home if sick, socially distant, wash hands water and soap, and wear a mask will be visible throughout campus.

Communication Plan

Communication with all stakeholders will be critical in ensuring a safe return to work and school. TLC's Communication and Outreach Plan is robust and multi-faceted, and aims at presenting accurate, updated, informed information frequently in American Sign Language and English (voice over to video and written English), as well as additional languages of our families including Spanish, French, and Portuguese. TLC's Health and Safety Logo will be on all pertinent signage and communication regarding COVID-19. Communication with questions related to reopening and COVID-19 should continue to be sent to the



Health and Safety email group healthandsafety@tlcdeaf.org. All information about our reopening, including videos of presentations as well, DESE updates and CDC guidelines, health and safety information, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available on the TLC website <https://www.tlcdeaf.org/coronavirus> for parents and other stakeholders. TLC employs several methods of actively communicating to families, including Constant Contact emails with weekly updates and information, Blackboard connect text alerts, surveys, and forums. Information is consistently presented in ASL, English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French, as well as additional languages as families indicate.

Building Access/Re-occupancy Protocols

For each building, there will be a protocol developed based on the physical space and the needs of the program. There will be one point of entry for each building and (wherever possible), one separate point of exit, to maintain social distancing. There will be signage on each building to indicate exit and entry and whenever possible and the creation of one-way directional hallways to ease foot traffic congestion. Key access cards will be restricted as necessary to minimize multiple points of entry. Wall mounted hand sanitizer dispensers will be added when no-contact entry is not possible. Lobby areas will be marked to encourage social distancing; waiting area chairs will be temporarily removed.

Kitchen/staff lounge use

In the initial phases of reopening, there will be no shared use of kitchens, staff lounges, or break rooms. Refrigerators, microwaves, toasters and stoves will not be in use. Phased re-openings of these locations began in March 2021, following protocol including sanitizing surfaces and continuing to prohibit the use of small appliances.

Elevator use

Elevator use will be restricted to one person at a time and signs on the elevator will remind everyone of this. An exception to this is when a student or another person needs assistance and cannot be in the elevator alone. Should this happen, the maximum capacity is two people, and masks are required.

Multi-stall bathrooms

All multi-stall bathrooms will be limited to single person use only. Signs on the door will serve as a reminder. All multi-stall bathrooms will be propped open with a wedge for contact-less entry, can be closed while in use by one person, and then propped open again after use.

Workstation Modifications

TLC will modify the workspace layout to create at least 6 feet of distance between employee workstations, plexiglass partitions will be utilized where appropriate, and face-to-face desk layouts will be changed.

Remote “punch-in” to Paylocity

All hourly employees will be expected to “clock-in” using the Paylocity app on their computer, tablet, or phone in order to have their hours entered into payroll. Instructions on how to log in using the app can be found here in [English](#) and [ASL](#). All “punch clocks” on campus will be disabled. Each employee should clock in at the start of their work and clock out at the end of their workday. Paylocity’s mobile app includes GPS.

Trainings/Meetings:

Until all social distancing requirements are lifted, TLC will avoid in-person meetings and training. Limited outdoor training may be allowed with prior approval from the program director. Instead, employees should conduct virtual meetings. Employees who are on campus should avoid gathering in groups.



Business Travel:

At this time, only essential business-related travel will be approved. There will be no travel for conferences and workshops, marketing or other events. A travel approval workflow will be implemented as reopening guidelines are determined.

Personal Travel:

Any employee who travels personally should follow MA state travel order and self-isolation [guidelines](#) and not return to work during the isolation period if coming from a high-risk state to ensure the safety of their peers. As reopening guidelines continue to develop, we will monitor and adjust all safety protocols to ensure the health and safety of our employees. It is important to note that this plan is fluid and is subject to changes and updates based on continually changing state and local guidance, and the pandemic's evolution.

Personal Protective Equipment Information

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used to help minimize the risk of exposure to viruses and bacteria. TLC has been purchasing PPE from various vendors throughout the closure. An inventory of masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, goggles and gowns has been procured and will continue to be purchased throughout the closing and reopening phases to meet the general guideline of having a three months' supply on hand. For most TLC staff, a face covering is the only PPE that will be needed. For some TLC staff, whose job requires additional PPE, TLC has a supply on hand and it will be provided to staff. All PPE is being disbursed based on the requirements of specific jobs. Please see your supervisor to ensure that you have the correct PPE to safely do your job.

REFLECTION, MID-COURSE CORRECTION, NEXT STEPS

As nonprofit organization employees, particularly those in our field of education and community service, the rate of change we have experienced in the last several months is probably greater than the rate of change school and organization systems have seen in the last two decades. Now, more than ever, we are going to need to be patient, kind, trust each other to open our hearts and minds to one another's perspectives. With more changes on the horizon, and the implementation of new systems and models of leading, serving, teaching and learning in the fall, we welcome input, and will continue to organize ways to connect and to problem-solve together. The input you have provided during the past several months has been invaluable, and we want to continue to hear and learn from each of you!



ADDENDEUM V.12

Summarized revised hybrid opening dates for Marie Philip and Walden School, as of 10/23/2020:

Student Return Dates

PRIORITIZATION
Youngest
Highest Need (<i>least benefit from online learning</i>)
Remote- Parent/Guardian choice

SUMMARY		
Week of	in-person	remaining fully remote
10/13 (or earlier)	22	50
Oct. 29th	25	
Nov. 2nd	42	
Nov. 9th	51	
Nov. 16th	32	
Total	170	50



Program	Blue Cohort (M/T)	Green Cohort (Th/F)	Remote
ECC			
10/29/2020		10	
11/2/2020 week	11		
11/9/2020 week			
11/16/2020 week			4
Elementary			
10/29/2020		2	
11/2/2020 week	5	10	
11/9/2020 week	9	7	
11/16/2020 week	5		7
Secondary			
10/13 - 10/29/2020	3	10	
11/2/2020 week	6	6	
11/9/2020 week	10	21	
11/16/2020 week	27		
			31
Residential 11/9/2020	1	3	3
MPS Totals	77	69	45
WS Residential (7 days/wk)		18	1
WS Commuter			
10/13/20		4	4
11/2/20	1	3	
WS Totals	19	25	4



